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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PEPR PINR SHUM HU RO
SUBJECT: HUNGARIANS REPLY TO ATTACK ON GYULA ILLYES"

REF: BUCHAREST 3251

1. SUMMARY: IN A FEATURE ARTICLE JULY 8, IN HUNGARY'S MAJOR LITERARY WEEKLY, A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ZSIGMOND PAL PACH, DEFENDED POET GYULA ILLYES AGAINST ATTACKS BY MIHNEA GHEORGHIU IN ROMANIAN LITERARY WEEKLY, LUCEAFARUL, MAY 6. PACH NOTED THAT IN HIS WRITINGS ILLYES HAS ALWAYS ADVOCATED A BREAK WITH EVERY FORM OF NATIONAL DISCRIMINATION BUT HAS ALSO ADVOCATED COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP WITH ROMANIA. AFTER REPLYING TO CRITIQUE OF ILLYES'S WORKS AND ENGAGING IN A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF TRANSYLVANIA QUESTION PACH CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT IGNORING
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ISSUE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES CAN ONLY AGGRAVATE THE PROBLEM. HE RECOMMENDED CALM DEBATE AND DAY-BY-DAY EFFORTS TO FIND SOLUTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. PACH ARTICLE IN WEEKLY JOURNAL OF HUNGARIAN WRITERS' ASSOCIATION, ELET ES IRODALOM, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN MORE MODERATE TONES THAN ARTICLE BY ROMANIAN ACADEMICIAN WHICH TWO MONTHS

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EARLIER LAUNCHED AD HOMINEM ATTACH AGAINST GYULA ILLYES FOR HIS ADVOCACY OF MINORITY RIGHTS FOR HUNGARIANS RESIDING IN TRANSYLVANIA. WRITING AS SPOKESMAN FOR HUNGARIAN INTELLIGENSIA, PACH SAID LATTER WERE DISCONCERTED AND SURPRISED BY GHEORGHIU'S POLEMIC. HE GOES SO FAR AS TO SAY GHEORGHIU COULD NOT HAVE READ WORKS PUBLISHED BY ILLYES WHICH HE CLAIMS THE ROMANIAN HAS "DISTORTED IN THE EXTREME."

3. AFTER DEFENSE OF ILLYES'S NOVELS AND POETRY CRITICIZED BY GHEORGHIU AND REVIEW OF HISTORY OF NATIONALITY QUESTION STRESSING THEME THAT HUNGARIAN-ROMANIAN COOPERATION HAS BEEN THWARTED BY REACTIONARY RULING CLASSES FOR PAST TWO CENTURIES, PACH MADE SOME POINTED OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PRESENT STATUS OF MINORITIES QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT DIVERGENCIES. PACH SAID, AS MISTAKENLY BELIEVED IN PAST, SOCIALIST TRANSOORMATION WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY BRING A SOLUTION IN DANUBE REGION OF MINORITIES QUESTION. MINES LAID DOWN OVER CENTURIES CANNOT BE DEFUSED OVER-NIGHT "NOR IS IT POSSIBLE TO IGNORE THEM" AS GHEORGHIU DOES. TO PRETEND PROBLEM DOES NOT EXIST WOULD REVIVE HOSTILE ATTITUDES AND ONE-SIDED INTERPRETATIONS OF HISTORY, PACH CONTINUED. "WE STAND," HE SAID, "FOR OBJECTIVE AND CALM DEBATE, AMICABLE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, STILL MORE FOR PERSISTENT PAINSTAKING DAY-BY-DAY EFFORTS IN ORDER TO FIND SOLUTIONS, SO THAT NEITHER NATIONALITY (ROMANIANS IN HUNGARY AND HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA) SHOULD PERCEIVE EVEN THE SLIGHTEST MARK OF DISCRIMINATION."

4. PACH CONCLUDED HIS ARTICLE BY EVOKING THE KADAR-CEAUSESCU
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MEETING OF A YEAR AGO AND THE SUBSEQUENT JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH CALLED FOR THE NATIONALITIES TO ACT AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN HUNGARY AND ROMANIA. HE SAID THE CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSURING THIS ROLE LIES WITH THE MAJORITY NATION IN EACH COUNTRY AND THAT HUNGARY WILL LEAVE NOTHING UNDONE TO FURTHER COOPERATION WITH ROMANIA AND TRUST AND FRIENDSHIP ON THE INTERNATIONALIST ROAD.

5. COMMENT: THIS HUNGARIAN REPLY TO GHEORGHIU WAS CAREFULLY MADE AT THE SAME LEVEL AND IN THE IDENTICAL FORUM AS GHEORGHIU'S ATTACK ON ILLYES WAS MADE, THUS PRESERVING THE INTELLECTUAL-TO-INTELLECTUAL NATURE OF THE EXCHANGE. NEVERTHELESS, THE ARTICLE ALSO REFLECTS OFFICIAL VIEWS IN BUDAPEST. IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE MOMENT THAT GHEORGHIU'S ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN THAT IT WOULD BE ANSWERED; A REPLY WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE OF ILLYES' STATURE, KADAR'S NEED TO KEEP PEACE WITH THE HUNGARIAN INTELLIGENTSIA, AND THE HUNGARIAN DESIRE FOR AND IMPROVEMENT ON AN AMICABLE BASIS IN THE STATUS OF THE ETHNIC HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA. WHAT IS NOT CLEAR IN BUDAPEST AT THIS TIME IS WHETHER THE ROMANIANS WILL NOW LET THE MATTER DROP AT THE CONCLUSION OF ROUND THREE IN THIS PARTICULAR DEBATE, OR IF A ROUND FOUR IS COMING UP.

6. IN ANY CASE THE ARTICLE RESTATES THE HUNGARIAN POSITION THAT

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BUDAPEST CANNOT IGNORE THE FATE OF THE ETHNIC HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN ROMANIA. WE SUSPECT THAT IT IS THIS POSITION, RATHER THAN ANYTHING SPECIFIC WHICH ILLYES SAID IN HIS ARTICLES SEVEN MONTHS AGO, WHICH IS WHAT IS REALLY STICKING IN THE ROMANIAN CRAW. THUS IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF THE HUNGARIANS WILL ACHIEVE THEIR GOAL OF HAVING AN AMICABLE DIALOGUE WITH THE ROMANIANS ON THIS GENERAL SUBJECT. WE DON'T THINK THEIR CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE PARTICULARLY GOOD.
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